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By MICHAEL CLEVELAND, Staff Writer
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MILFORD – New Hampshire is fortunate not to have huge industries upon which the state and workers rely but instead hundreds of smaller companies that can more easily survive an economic downturn, U.S. Rep. Charlie Bass told employees of Cirtronics Corp. earlier this month.

Bass toured the facility and spoke with several employees, then addressed a group of about 80 in the firm's cafeteria. Bass, a Republican, is running for re-election in the 2nd Congressional District.

"New Hampshire's economy is unique in the nation in that we have a lot of companies like Cirtronics," Bass aid. "They make very specialized products that require employees that have very good skills, are well-paid and have good benefits. Companies like this compete in niche markets around the world."

Unlike a state such as Michigan, which is heavily dependent upon the automotive industry, New Hampshire produces many products out of companies with smaller capacities, he said.

"That means we can sustain ourselves better in poorer economic times," Bass said. "The whole economy doesn't collapse if the auto industry or the energy industry" has a problem.

But when it comes to problems, Bass said that Washington has a major one: the inability of Republicans and Democrats to work together.

"We have to start solving problems in this nation," he said. "The American people deserve solutions to the problems that we face. I do not want to see Jan. 1 roll around and have us sitting on the floor of the House at midnight on New Year's Eve arguing over whether we're for tax reductions or spending reductions or whether we want to tax the rich. We have to solve the problems."

Bass said he was one of four Republicans who joined with four Democrats to push for a budget based upon the recommendations of the Simpson-Bowles Commission. It called for reduced federal spending but also some revenue increases and was commissioned by President Obama, but the plan never was implemented.

"It's a plan to get this country back on track, first of all by turning the economy around, getting the budget balanced, getting our debt under control," Bass said.

But it didn't make everyone happy, he said.

"It doesn't make conservative Republicans all that happy because there's tax reform," he said. "It doesn't make liberal Democrats happy because there are significant recommendations for

reductions in the grown of entitlement spending."

But, he said, "My friends, it's what we have to do. It's what we have to do, whether we like it or not, to save this country" for future generations.

And that, he said, is why he ran for Congress again after being defeated a few years ago – to solve the big problems.

"I'm here because we have to get this country going in a different direction," he said. "It's time for the arguing and the fighting and the bickering and the partisanship to be second to solving the nation's issues," Bass said. "That's my mandate for the next 2 1/2 years, starting now, before the election."